

THE  
**FUTURE  
OF  
AMERICA'S  
NATIONAL  
PARKS**

First Annual  
Centennial Strategy for

# Morristown National Historical Park

August 2007

CENTENNIAL INITIATIVE



**Site:** MORR

**Year:** 2007

**Vision Statement**

The National Park Service is planning to celebrate the 100 year anniversary of its service to the American People and its visitors from around the world. The vision for "The Future of America's National Park" at Morristown National Historical Park is exciting, invigorating, and a benefit the public. Efforts include to improve the safety, ADA, and aesthetic standards of walkways and structures; strengthen ties with community and business partners; incorporate the NPS's natural vital sign program to improve the ecological health of the park; enable more visitors to have access to our artifacts, bound printed materials, and manuscripts; ensure middle and high schools become part of the interpretative programs at the park; and to integrate new technology into the park's interpretative programs. The Centennial Vision will cultivate the overarching themes of stewardship, education, preservation, and community involvement.

In 1976, Morristown National Historical Park was part of the National Park Service bicentennial to construct visitor centers reflective of the philosophical value of blending structures into landscapes. In planning for the centennial initiative in 2016, the walkway project will help to transition people from moving from modernity constructed in 1976 into the park's 18th century landscape that captures the experiences and lifestyles common to those of noticeable wealth for this period of history.

The NPS spent several million dollars to expand the museum at Morristown NHP, adding over 5,000 square feet of new space. Therefore, the public will have greater access to the park's 40,000 artifacts, 50,000 printed bound materials, and 225,000 manuscripts. The interpretation operation will go high-tech by using pod casting and virtual technology. Middle and high school students will enact history after studying authentic period materials. Indeed, we plan to enliven history for our 67,000 contact and 262,000 annual visitors.

The ecology health and integrity of our forest are important. With urban and suburban sprawl, global warming, and species becoming endangered and extinct, Morristown National Historical Park is taking measures to restore and regenerate the forest at its park so that it reflects a plethora of natural resources and the pristine forest of the eighteenth century America.

In October 2006 President Bush signed legislation designating the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area in New Jersey as the 37th Heritage

**Park/ Superintendent/ Program Manager**

Randy Turner



Site: MORR

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Improve the condition of park resources and assets.**

☒ **Restore native habitats by controlling invasive species and reintroducing key plant and animal species.**

Objective: To setup and/or expand the park's invasive plant control and restoration demonstration projects.

In partnership with the Student Conservation Association and under the direction of the Northeast Exotic Plant Management Team, crew members from the Student Conservation Association and rangers from MORR will work together to build on work already done and/or funded at the park.

One of the pressing issues at MORR is a failing forest due to deer browsing, soil transmutation that favors exotic species over native plant species, and sparse regeneration of native trees. This project will duplicate the successful native plant demonstration project started by Rutgers University.

Under the supervision of park personnel and in consultation with staff from Rutgers University Ecology Department, crew members will address infested forested areas, help to install deer exclosures, plant native woody vegetation, and remove invasive exotic species.

The efforts achieved at this park will be shared with other parks throughout the mid-Atlantic region. In addition, staff members from Upper Delaware Scenic and Recreation River are yet another partner in this endeavor. Both parks will ex

☒ The work described currently is supported by OFS and/ or PMIS

☒ **Improve high-priority assets to acceptable condition, as measured by the Facility Condition Index.**

Objective: To correct serious deficiency in site access and visitor circulation to Jockey Hollow Visitor Center (FMSS Asset number 62957) and historic Wick House (FMSS Asset number 62856).

In partnership with an anonymous donor, the final product will result in a rehabilitated walkway surface based on safety, aesthetics, and cultural recommendations generated from this endeavor. The improved walkway surface will also serve individuals with mobility challenges.

In order to rehabilitate the pathway, the current loose stone surface layer will be removed. This surface has made it difficult for individuals with a mobility challenges to easily enter into the "18th century" by leaving the "modern-period." The successful completion of this project will reverse this situation and provide all visitors with a walkway that complements and blends with nature for enjoyment and benefit of the public.

Site: MORR

STEWARDSHIP

☒ Improve the condition of park resources and assets.

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☒ Improve the natural resources in parks, as measured by the vital signs developed under the Natural Resource Challenge.

Objective: To enhance the biological integrity of the park.

The Northeast Temperate Network (NETN) along with the Student Conservation Association (SCA) will jointly use the NPS vital sign program as critical guidelines to restore and regenerate the park's forest. It is clear from NETN's reports that tree regeneration is a serious problem at the park. Due to several issues, including deer browsing, scientists have documented that tree regeneration has been compromised due to the lack of tree seedlings in the park, soil re-composition, and invasive plants, among many other ecological issues that the park faces daily.

NETN also noted that the lack of under-story provides an early warning indicator that the forest is in danger of not regenerating. Among the "150 potential vital signs" (NETN Vital Signs Monitoring Plan Technical Report-2006/059, p. 39), the growth and presence of invasive and exotic plants infringe onto the physical space from which native plants should grow. It is clear that when both sets of vegetation compete for the same land mass, the invasive plants turns out to be the victors. Therefore, exotic and invasive plant species is a second major problem at the park.

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Site: MORR

STEWARDSHIP

☒ **Assure that no compelling chapter in the American heritage experience remains untold and that strategically important landscapes are acquired, as authorized by Congress.**

☒ **Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)**

Objective: To preserve local historic assets and landscapes important to the history of the country

Legislation was signed by the administration designating the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area in NJ. The Crossroads of the American RHNA Association was formed to carry out its mission to work with 14 counties and 213 cities and towns in NJ to tell the story of the critical role NJ played in this country's fight for independence. Throughout this crossroad corridor, from New York City to Philadelphia, municipalities, businesses, and community organizations will join efforts to preserve certain historical assets, protect historically significant landscapes, and represent a strategic fulcrum share the history of NJ to present and future generations through local organizations.

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Site: MORR

EDUCATION

☒ Introduce young people and their families to national parks by using exciting media and technology.

☒ Increase the number of web hits through the introduction of advanced, interactive features that attract young people to national parks.

Objective: To increase the use of interactive resources and virtual technology:

Over the years, the interpretation division will plan and implement interpretative interactive equipment so that the public can gain greater access about the mission of the park and its administrative history. There will be a concerted effort to tailor the use of this equipment, such as I Pods, to adolescents and young adults. Moreover, a greater attempt will be made to motivate, encourage, and/or inspire the public to use the internet and web. One idea, for example, is to inform the 67,000 contact visitors and the 225,000 commuting visitors about the new technology and that the new technology can inform them about learning more about the park and the NPS through the park's and NPS's website.

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☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Objective: To expand cultural resource services:

The NPS recently added 5,000 square feet of space (an entirely new wing) to the park's existing 1933 museum. Consequently, the public will have access to the park's 40,000 artifacts, 50,000 printed bound materials, and 225,000 manuscripts. Research space will be provided to the public and plans are in place to have colleges and universities to use the park's library as a vital resource center for 18th century research.

In addition, plan to involve for the first time education programs for middle and high school students so that they can also have access to our wealth of 18th information and use it to bring history alive in well planned enactments based on actual historical figures and their written work.

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Site: MORR

PROFESSIONALISM

☒ Promote a safety and health culture for all employees and visitors.

☒ Other Park/ Program performance goal(s)

Objective: To strengthen ties with community and business partners:

The park will assist the citizens of New Jersey to implement programs through the Crossroads of the American Revolution National Heritage Area and Association. The park will have a conduit role to help to link and network with various types of partners (businesses, community organizations, and municipalities) in NJ. The initial elements will include the development of series of plans centered on resource inventories, a land-use planning inventory, interpretative themes, communication plans, and management alternative.

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